

TRAWDEN

Urban District Council.



ANNUAL REPORT

OF

Medical Officer of Health.

1904.

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Wrawden Urban Sanitary District.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my second Annual Report, for the year 1904, which I regret to say, compares most unfavourably with that of 1903, and indeed, for many previous years.

The estimated population for 1904 was 2780. There were 695 inhabited houses. The average number of inhabitants to each house was slightly under 4.

The year 1904 has been an unfortunate one in many respects. The weather until the middle of June was cold, and the cause of much sickness, the searching east winds preventing quick recovery. The summer months, though fine and sunny, were very dry, the long-continued drought being very unhealthy on account of the dust and germs of infection being blown about. The autumn was cold. The winter started early, a heavy and continued snowstorm being experienced in November, causing many cases of pneumonia. In December there was a severe blizzard, with a hurricane of bitterly cold wind, again accompanied by clouds of dust. The last two months of the year were also marked by dense fogs of a peculiar frozen character. To make things worse and more detrimental to health, trade in the district was bad.

The sanitary condition of the houses built during the last twenty years is good. The same cannot be said of some of the old property, the condition of some of them being far from perfect.

There are few back to back rows of houses, a fact which may be the reason of our low Phthisis Death Rate.

There is hardly any overcrowding. I know of only two families whose houses are insufficiently large for proper accommodation.

Fifty-seven deaths were registered, almost twice as many as during last year. There were twenty deaths of males, and thirty-seven of females. This, in a population of 2780, gives a death rate of 20·5 per thousand of the population, a large increase on 1903, and an increase on the average of the last ten years.

Seventy-three births were registered, 33 males and 40 females, two less than in 1903. This gives a birth-rate per thousand of the population of 26·2, a decrease on 1903, and a decrease on the average of the last ten years.

There were no illegitimate births registered.

There were three cases of Infectious Notifiable disease: Diphtheria one, Membranous Croup one, and Erysipelas one. There were two deaths, the first named proving fatal. The patients suffering were aged four years, two years, and thirty-four years respectively. This gives a Notifiable Zymotic death-rate of ·7 per thousand.

There was a large amount of non-notifiable infectious disease. In May a severe epidemic of Measles visited the district, and continued until the end of the third week of June. In May ninety-six cases were ascertained, of which one proved fatal. In June there were twenty cases, with two deaths. The deaths occurred in infants under twelve months of age, and were due to complications, namely Pneumonia. Each case was due to infection from other children suffering in the same house.

A special report was made and handed to the Health Committee.

Methods employed to check the Epidemic.—In addition to disinfection, and prevention of children attending school from infected houses, I wrote to the Head Masters of the schools in the district, asking their co-operation in checking the Epidemic. I requested that any children who appeared at all out of health should be sent home until the exact nature of the case was determined, pointing out that such child might be in the initial

stage of measles, and therefore infectious to the other scholars. I also requested that the habit of sending children as messengers to houses to enquire as to the cause of non-attendance of absentees should be stopped, pointing out that the house so visited might easily be infected, either by measles or any other disease, and that the messenger might take the infection, and through him, others in the school.

In my opinion this practice is a foolish one, even in times of health, as the house visited might contain the first patient of an epidemic. In times of epidemic it is highly dangerous.

I also caused bills to be printed and posted in prominent parts of the district, instructing parents to notify cases to the Sanitary Inspector, who, in his turn, notified the cause of non-attendance to the School authorities, and also supplied suitable disinfectants in each case. Parents were requested to prevent their children when recovering, from playing with others.

The special danger of Measles in children under two years of age—that of complication with Pneumonia of a very fatal type, was pointed out.

I regret to state that in several cases this advice was ignored by parents, and that children only two days ill, and covered with rash, were allowed to play with healthy children in the streets. This callous indifference to the health of their own children, and the comfort and health of others, hampered the efforts of the Health Authorities. Indeed, it is a matter for congratulation that the Epidemic was checked in so short a time, (first case early in May, last case 20th June.)

On May 17th, in view of the rapid spread of the Epidemic and to safe-guard those scholars as yet not affected, I advised the Health Committee to close the Trawden Infant and Mixed Schools, until the usual re-opening after the Whitsuntide Holiday, (May 30th). I consider that this step materially checked the number and severity of the cases.

Cause of Outbreak.—From enquiries made, it appears that a woman living in Trawden, visited, with her child, a friend in a neighbouring district. A child in the house visited was barely convalescent from an attack of Measles, (and therefore in a very infectious stage of the disease). The children were allowed to play together for two hours, with the natural result that the healthy child was infected. This child, before the disease was developed sufficiently acutely to prevent it attending school, infected those children who sat near to it, and these in their turn, and in a similar manner, infected others, and thus the Epidemic spread rapidly, there being so many *foci* of infection.

It is probably the familiarity which people have acquired for measles which causes them to hold it in contempt. There seems to be a theory that it is a disease that every child must have. It is even a not infrequent practice, in a large family of children to invite infection when one child is ill, by putting healthy children to sleep with the infected one, in order to have all the children ill at once, and not to have one probably starting when another has recovered, and so be troubled with a long term of sickness.

People would be more careful of Measles were they to understand that it is one of the most infectious of diseases, and exceedingly fatal in children under two years of age.

In fact more deaths are caused by Measles than by all other infectious diseases put together, and yet it is not, in many places, this district among others, a notifiable disease.

The Health Authorities, by obtaining early notice of an outbreak, would be able to take prompt measures to stamp out the Epidemic.

In October, fifteen cases of Chicken-Pox were ascertained.

In November, there were twenty cases of Whooping Cough, and in December five cases, one of which, in an infant, and complicated with Pneumonia, proved fatal.

I here show the Tabulation of Deaths from Zymotic Diseases, both notifiable and non-notifiable.

	Total.		Under one year.		Over one and under five years.
Diphtheria†.....	1	.....	0	.....	1
Membranous Croup†.....	1	.....	0	.....	1
Measles*.....	3	.....	3	.....	0
Whooping Cough*	1	.....	1	.....	0
	—		—		—
† Notifiable	2		4		2
* Non-Notifiable ...	4				
	—				
Total...	6				

This gives a total Zymotic death-rate of 2·1 per 1000 of population.

The total number of infectious cases reported to me and ascertained was 159, giving a total Zymotic rate of 57·1 per 1000 of population.

In every case prompt measures were taken to prevent infection, and suitable disinfectants were used.

Infant Death Rate.—The infant death rate for 1904, is high. Seventeen infants died. I regret to state that this is more than four times the number registered in 1903, indeed as many as were registered in 1901, 1902, and 1903 put together. It is the highest number during the last ten years. Per 1000 births registered it gives an infant death-rate of 232·8.

As already stated, three deaths were caused by Measles, and one by Whooping Cough. Four infants barely survived their birth, one dying after living only twenty-four hours, one after thirty hours, one six days, and one thirteen days.

Three children died between the ages of one month and three months; four between three and six months; one between six and nine months; and five between nine and twelve months.

The following table shows the ages and causes of all infant deaths.

CAUSE OF INFANT DEATHS AND AGES AT DEATH.

	Totals.	Measles.	Whoop- ing Cough.	Convul- sions.	Dentition	Weak- ness from Birth.	Inflam- mation of Stomach.	Pneu- monia.	Pre- mature Birth.	Maras- mus.
Under 1 month	4	—	—	1	—	2	—	—	1	—
Over 1 month and under 3 months	3	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	1
Over 3 and under 6 months.....	1	—	1	—	—	1	1	1	—	—
Over 6 and under 9 months.....	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Over 9 and under 12 months	5	2	—	—	2	—	—	1	—	—
	17	3	1	2	2	4	1	2	1	1

CAUSE of INFANT DEATHS and the MONTHS when REGISTERED.

This table shows the causes of all infant deaths, and the months of the year in which they occurred.

DISEASE.	Totals.	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.
Measles	3	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Convulsions.....	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Dentition	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Weakness from Birth.....	4	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	1	—	—
Inflammation of Stomach ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Pneumonia	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Premature Birth	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Marasmus	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	17	—	1	—	1	3	2	—	1	2	2	3	2

The only consolation that can be derived from the high rate is that the usual cause of infant mortality—that of improper feeding—is absent.

Another very fertile cause of infant mortality is the practice which prevails in many of our Lancashire towns, of nursing out infants whose mothers work in the mill. To rouse a child from sleep before six o'clock, carry it through the streets in the chill of a winter's morning, and leave it at a house where probably the fires are not yet lighted, must have a detrimental effect on the child's health, sowing the seeds of pulmonary troubles, and of other infantile diseases.

Respiratory Diseases.—There were eleven deaths from Respiratory diseases, giving a Respiratory death-rate of 3·9 per 1000 of the population.

Phthisis.—There were three deaths from Phthisis, at the ages of four years, forty eight years, and 68 years respectively. This gives a Phthisis death-rate of 1 per 1000.

The following table gives the cause of and ages at death for the district.

Causes of, and Ages at, Death during the Year 1904.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards
Measles	3	3	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria and Membranous Croup	2	—	2	—	—	—	—
Epidemic Influenza	2	—	—	—	1	1	—
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	3	—	1	—	—	2	—
Cancer, malignant disease	2	—	—	—	—	1	1
Bronchitis	2	—	—	—	—	1	1
Pneumonia	7	2	3	1	—	1	—
Pleurisy	2	—	—	1	—	—	1
Premature Birth.....	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Diseases and Accidents of parturition	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Heart Diseases	4	—	—	—	—	2	2
Dentition	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
Convulsions	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
Weakness from birth.....	4	4	—	—	—	—	—
“Marasmus”	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Inflammation of Stomach	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Inquest Cases.....	3	—	—	—	—	1	2
All other Causes	14	—	—	—	—	11	3
All Causes	57	17	6	2	1	21	10

There were 6 deaths between 1 year and under 5 years of age. Phthisis 1, Diphtheria 1, Membranous Croup 1, and Pneumonia 3.

There were 2 deaths between 5 years and under 15 years, both from Pulmonary diseases.

There was one death between 15 years and under 25 years, Epidemic Influenza being the cause of death.

There were 21 deaths between 25 years and under 65 years. There were 10 deaths from 65 years and upwards.

The greatest age at death was 78 years.

The average age at death was 32.6 years.

The following table shows the cause of death at all ages, and the number registered each month. From it will be seen that the lowest mortality was in the months of January and August, and the highest in the months of April and May.

CAUSE OF DEATH AT ALL AGES AND NUMBER REGISTERED EACH MONTH.

DISEASE.	Total	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Phthisis	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	7	—	1	—	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	2
Bronchitis	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Diphtheria	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pleurisy	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Heart Disease.....	4	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Dentition	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Measles	3	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Convulsions.....	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Weakness from birth	4	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	—	—	—
Inflammation of Stomach ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Premature Birth	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
"Marasmus"	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cancer	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Membranous Croup	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Diseases and Accidents of Parturition	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Epidemic Influenza	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Inquest Cases	3	—	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
All other Causes	14	—	—	2	3	—	4	2	—	1	2	—	—
Totals.....	57	1	4	2	9	9	7	3	1	4	5	7	5

House Refuse.—The removal of this is performed satisfactorily by contract and it is deposited in disused quarries.

Water Supply.—The quality is good. A sufficient quantity is given during the wet months, but in summer the supply becomes short, which is a source of considerable inconvenience. In December an inquiry was held on account of the Council desiring to obtain borrowing powers to carry out a Water Scheme to utilize the water which has been found on Boulsworth Hill. An ample supply of water of first class quality has been obtained by driving a drift into the side of the hill. The water which comes from sandstone is of sparkling clearness, cold and pleasant to drink. It has been analysed and found pure and suitable for domestic purposes. When this water is stored and conveyed in pipes the long felt water difficulty will be solved.

Slaughter Houses.—Three, all in good condition. No unsound meat.

Bake Houses.—All in good condition.

Dairies.—None.

Cowsheds and Milkshops.—Some of the cowsheds are in good condition, large and airy, and the cattle seem well cared for. Others are not in good condition, are badly ventilated, low roofed and dirty. Regulations have not been adopted.

Lodging Houses.—None.

Factories and Workshops.—The condition of two of the factories is good. The others require much improvement, the sanitary arrangements being absolutely deficient and lacking in cleanliness. I met the Health Committee on several occasions, and we inspected the Sanitary Accommodations of the factories, and found in most of the mills a state of things which it is difficult to describe. The closets were in a filthy condition, a condition which absolutely precluded the use of the majority of them, a state of things which must necessarily act detrimentally on the health of the workers and which must cause much discomfort.

I reported on the subject, suggesting that closets on the Water System would rectify matters. I hoped that my suggestion would be adopted, seeing that one of the mills is in a perfect condition, a water system being used, and naturally thought that if this were possible in one mill it would be possible in all.

I regret to say that the Council did not see their way to move in the matter. no doubt the shortage of water being the principal reason. I consider it my duty to report that with the exception of two closets which are improved, the sanitary condition of the mills complained of is as bad as ever. I cannot say that they are worse, as it would be impossible for them to be so. I trust that, when the new water supply is brought in, improving the condition of the mills may be the first use to which it is put.

In the meantime, however, much may be done by enforcing and maintaining cleanliness, and by repairing those closets which are dilapidated and adding others. I further suggest that the Sanitary Inspector should report monthly to the Health Committee the condition of the mill accomodation.

So far as the interior of the Factories is concerned, they appear clean and well ventilated

Methods of dealing with Infectious Diseases.—Isolation as far as possible. Fumigation, Disinfection and General Cleanliness.

Scavenging.—Done by the Employees of the Council.

House Accomodation.—Very good, no overcrowding. Some old houses are not in a good condition.

Sewage.—The Sewage Works are in good order and working satisfactorily.

NUISANCES.—Mr. Tatham reports as follows: “15 notices served; 7 abated, 4 improved, 4 in abeyance.”

I consider it my duty to report to you a very obnoxious practice by which loss of life may be entailed.

During the summer of 1904, some men, of a class from which one might expect such practices, in order to easily obtain trout from the Wycollar Brook, between Dene House and Parson Lea, placed in the water Chloride of Lime, locally known as "Chemic." This happened in the height of the hot weather, at a time when Wycollar was crowded by visitors from the surrounding districts.

As you know, Wycollar is a beautiful wooded glen and a well-known place of resort for people from the neighbouring towns of Colne, Nelson, Burnley and Keighley, who visit it not only on account of its beauty, but also because of the historical associations of its old Hall. Had any of these visitors drunk of the water of the brook at the time the poison was passing down, serious indisposition, if not death, would have resulted.

I have personally seen children and even adults drinking of the brook water, which is clean and clear, and as this happened on a hot dry day, it is only by a lucky chance that fatalities were avoided.

Chloride of Lime is a powerful corrosive poison. Fish subjected to a solution of it are suffocated through breathing the tainted water, after suffering corrosion of the skin and destruction of the eyes by burning. I trust that steps may be taken to stop such a dangerous practice in the future.

The Wycollar Brook has been poisoned several times to my knowledge during the last ten years. So also has the Trawden Brook both above and below Lumb Spout. Poisoning has also been done in the district on the river whose south bank is bounded by the Bough Gap and Winewall Farms. In this portion, there is not the same risk of direct injury to human beings, but cattle drinking the water run the risk of suffering, and through them, the inhabitants of the district.

I trust my next report will be of a more satisfactory nature.

Appended are Vital Statistics for 1904 and previous years.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

168, Keighley Road,

GEORGE SKEEN.

Colne, March 7th, 1905.

VITAL STATISTICS DURING 1904 AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT.			NETT DEATHS AT ALL AGES BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.	
		Number.	*Rate.	Under 1 Year of Age.		*Rate.	Number.	*Rate.
				Number.	Rate per 1000 Births registered.			
1894	2411	81	33.5	12	148	16.5	40	16.5
1895	2430	73	30.5	16	219	23.0	56	23.0
1896	2449	76	31.0	14	184	19.1	47	19.1
1897	2500	81	32.4	7	87	15.2	38	15.2
1898	2525	82	32.8	14	170	14.8	37	14.8
1899	2545	62	24.5	15	241	18.6	47	18.6
1900	2565	69	26.93	12	174	15.2	39	15.2
1901	2641	58	21.96	8	137	13.21	34	13.21
1902	2727	58	21.2	5	86	11.73	32	11.73
1903	2750	75	27.3	4	53.3	12.8	34	12.8
Averages for years 1894-1903.	2554.3	71.5	28.20	10.7	149.9	16.01	40.4	16.01
1904	2780	73	26.2	17	232.8	20.5	57	20.5

* Rates in Columns 4, 8, and 10 calculated per 1000 of estimated population.

VITAL STATISTICS IN 1904 AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	Births registered.	Deaths at all Ages.	Deaths under 1 year.
1894	2411	81	40	12
1895	2430	73	56	16
1896	2449	76	47	14
1897	2500	81	38	7
1898	2525	82	37	14
1899	2545	62	47	15
1900	2565	69	39	12
1901	2641	58	34	8
1902	2727	58	32	5
1903	2750	75	34	4
Averages of years } 1894 to 1903.	2554.3	71.5	40.4	10.7
1904	2780	73	57	17

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1904.

NOTIFIED DISEASES.	At all Ages.	Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 and upwards.
Diphtheria	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Membranous Croup	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Totals	3	—	2	—	—	1	—

